



Florence Downtown Commercial Rehabilitation Program

Program Overview and Purpose

The Florence Downtown Commercial Rehabilitation Program is a matching grant program that assists property owners, business owners, and Non-Profits with rehabilitating commercial properties within the Florence Downtown Redevelopment Area. The intent of the program is to address deteriorating property conditions and encourage the use of unoccupied buildings to generate commercial activity and to prevent, detect, investigate, and enforce any violations of statutes and ordinances regulating public health, safety, and welfare. A.R.S. §36-1472 allows a public body to expend public funds to preserve public health and safety that assists in the elimination of slum and blight in the designated redevelopment area.

The grant program provides reimbursement of 75% for projects that correct documented interior or exterior code violations. The property owner or business owner pays 25% of the total project cost. The maximum grant award is \$50,000 per building. Grants are awarded based on the availability of funds, scope, and impact of the project, and are available on a first come, first served basis.

Eligible Participants

Eligible participants of the program include property owners and tenants of commercial buildings located within the Florence Downtown Redevelopment Area (see Attachment A – Downtown Redevelopment Area Map) including commercial projects that have a current Town of Florence Building Permit in the Redevelopment Area and meet the eligibility criteria for the program. Eligible properties must be zoned Downtown Commercial (DC), Neighborhood Business (B-1), Highway Business Commercial (B-2), Neighborhood Office (NO) and Planned Unit Development (PUD). A business owner who leases a commercial property must have written approval from the property owner to participate in the program. Applicants may be awarded funding for only one project within each grant cycle.

Eligible Improvements

Eligible interior or exterior improvements must correct code deficiencies as documented by the Town of Florence. The work submitted and completed must meet all Town of Florence Building and Safety Codes in effect at the time of application upon completion of work. All work must be completed by an Arizona registered commercial contractor. The program reimburses costs for labor and materials to complete the project.

Examples of eligible activities or improvements include:

1. International Building Code deficiencies.
2. Life safety issues, to include fire sprinkler and fire alarm systems.
3. Design and engineering to facilitate project,
4. Structural improvements,
5. Electrical and plumbing improvements,
6. Mechanical improvements to include HVAC systems,
7. Accessibility improvements for ADA compliance,
8. Structural components of awnings,
9. Restroom installation or improvements,
10. Roof repairs or replacement,
11. Replacement of principal fixtures and components of existing structures,
12. Renovation through alterations, additions to, or enhancement of existing structures and improvements,
13. Abatement of asbestos and lead hazards and other contaminants.

Ineligible Improvements and Exclusions

Examples of ineligible activities include:

1. New building construction
2. Façade improvements, other than to repair structural deficiencies (see available façade program), and
3. Any items that are not allowed by the Town of Florence Town Code or applicable International Codes as adopted with amendments.

Funds may not be used for working capital; routine maintenance; or repairs; the acquisition of property (land); equipment or inventory acquisition; refinancing of existing debt; or refinancing private funding. Applicants can apply for a Façade Grant concurrently with a Downtown Commercial Rehabilitation Grant.

Application Schedule

July 1	Accepting applications
May 30	Deadline to submit final reimbursement request during the current fiscal year.

Program Administration

The Program provides participants the opportunity to receive reimbursement for 75% of eligible, pre-approved improvement costs. The maximum amount for any individual grant award is \$50,000 per individual property owner.

The **Florence Downtown Commercial Rehabilitation Program** is administered by the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce (Chamber). Final decisions of grant awards, the amount of grant award and eligible projects will be made by the Grant Review Committee. The review committee will consist of the Chamber Executive Director, Florence Community Development Director or assignee, and the Town of Florence Economic Development Director. Appeals may be submitted to the Chamber within 30 days of notification. Funding for the program is subject to availability each fiscal year. The Town of Florence provides funding for the implementation of the program to fulfill the following goals:

- To correct violations to the Town of Florence Building and Life Safety Codes as recognized by the Town of Florence code professionals.
- To restore or rehabilitate historic commercial structures and return them to use.
- To encourage economic growth in the Florence Redevelopment Area.
- To reduce the risk of damage by fire in commercial buildings.

All improvements should be permanent to the structure and remain as part of the property if the building is sold. If the property is sold prior to the completion of the approved project, the ownership of the building permit may be transferred according to the International Building Code.

Property Owner Obligations

The property owner shall be solely responsible for all improvements. The property owner's obligations under this Agreement include, but are not limited to:

1. The property owner, or responsible party, shall be responsible for providing professionally installed building improvements. When required, the property owner shall obtain a Town of Florence demolition and/or building permit and, when required, the work to be completed by an Arizona registered commercial contractor. Some projects may require a registered Architect or Engineer, this will be made clear during the pre-application meeting.
2. The property owner or responsible party will be required to attend a pre-application meeting to include the Town of Florence Community Development Team, Economic Development Director, and the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce. During this meeting, the following will be addressed:
 - Scope of work to be included.
 - If a registered Architect is required for the scope of work.

- Application and permit expectations as well as required inspections will be completed within our published review timeframes. Inspections will be completed, once requested, within 24 hours.
 - Town of Florence Staff will facilitate a discussion as to the required submittals to Town of Florence Commissions involved in the approval, i.e., HDAC, Planning & Zoning Commission.
 - The application process will be placed as a “priority” once all of the documents are received from the applicant.
 - As an additional benefit, staff will provide a list of traditional and non-traditional lenders that service our community, if additional funding is needed to complete the project.
3. The property owner shall be responsible for maintaining all improvements.
 4. The property owner shall allow access to the Town’s employees, agents, and representatives for inspection of all improvements.
 5. The property owner and/or business owner must maintain property insurance.

Indemnity

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the Property Owner and Tenant shall jointly and severally protect, defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Florence, and their Council members, agents, officers, officials, representatives and employees from and against all suits, claims, demands, damages, losses, liabilities, fines, charges, penalties, administrative and judicial proceedings and orders, judgments, remedial actions of any kind, and all costs and cleanup actions of any kind, together with expenses (including but not limited to attorneys’ fees, court costs, experts’ fees, the cost of appellate proceedings, and all claim adjusting and handling expenses), relating to, arising out of, resulting from or alleged to have resulted from the Property Owner’s and/or Tenant’s acts, errors, mistakes or omissions relating to any action or inaction of the Property Owner and/or Tenant under this Program, including, but not limited to the acts, errors, mistakes, omissions, work or services of the Property Owner’s and Tenant’s agents, employees, contractors, subcontractors or anyone for whose acts they or the Property Owner and/or Tenant may be liable in the performance of the improvements.

The Property Owner’s and Tenant’s duty to defend, hold harmless and indemnify the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce and Town, its Council members, agents, officers, officials, representatives and employees shall arise in connection with any suits, claims, damages, losses or expenses that are attributable to or otherwise relate to, result from, or are alleged to have resulted from the Property Owner’s and Tenant’s acts, errors, mistakes or omissions relating to any action or inaction of the Property Owner and Tenant, including but not limited to the acts, errors, mistakes, omissions, work or services of the Property Owner’s and Tenant’s agents, employees, contractors, or anyone for whose acts

they or Property Owner and Tenant's may be liable in the performance of this Agreement, regardless of the legal or equitable grounds upon which such suits, claims, damages, losses and expenses are based.

Application Process

1. **Complete and submit a formal application** to the Florence Town Clerk, Florence Town Hall, 775 North Main Street, Florence, AZ 85132. The Town of Florence will accept applications on behalf of the Chamber.

A grant application must include:

- a. a completed application,
- b. a site plan drawn to scale,
- c. professional building Title reports as well as Title Insurance
- d. a scope of work and designs by a registered Architect or Engineer if applicable
- e. altered property rehabilitation plans drawn to scale,
- f. photographs of the existing condition,
- g. estimated total project costs including at least one bid for each project (bids are subject to review; additional bids may be requested),
- h. if tenant is the applicant, written authorization must be given by the property owner indicating permission to apply for the project,
- i. an electronic copy of submission materials
- j. a copy of the code violation notice/notices to be rectified by the Project, and
- k. a completed and signed W-9

2. Application Review Process: The Grant Review Committee will evaluate applications based on the following priority schedule:

Prioritization will be given to projects that, once completed, will give the property a full Certificate of Occupancy and will be based on the following priority schedule:

- Building structural issues (roof replacement)
- Electrical repair
- Fire prevention (alarms and/ or sprinkler system)
- ADA Bathrooms
- ADA barrier removal
- Total project budget
- Design plan
- Returning the facility into a productive use and/or creation of new uses within the space
- Approval of the Town of Florence Building Official and Fire Marshal

3. The Chamber will issue a formal "Notice to Proceed" after application approval: Any work initiated before "Notice to Proceed" will not be eligible for funds reimbursement.

Participants will be required to execute a written agreement with the Chamber to establish the terms, conditions, and requirements for participation in the program.

4. Prior to work starting on the project, the applicant must secure any required zoning clearances, building or development permits through the Town of Florence Community Development Department. Exterior improvement projects on properties located within the Florence Townsite Historic District must be approved by the **Florence Historic District Advisory Commission**. Additional design approval may be required by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

5. The applicant must submit copies of paid bills, cancelled checks, contractor lien waivers and receipts to the Chamber for reimbursement. Reimbursements can be requested on the last day of each month for work that has been completed. A receipt, picture of the completed work, and the line item within the application that the work applied to will be needed for each reimbursement. Approved payments will be processed and distributed within 30 days. If the proposed work is not completed, or the progress has stopped for a period of 180 days, the Town may cancel the grant award.

6. The Grant Review Committee will inspect the completed project to ensure that work was performed as outlined in application. This inspection does not replace or supersede any additional inspections that may be required by the Town's Building Safety Division.

7. The Applicant will be reimbursed up to the amount of the approved grant. Work must be completed by May 30 of the current fiscal year. Reimbursements for any work not completed by May 30 are subject to availability of funds in the subsequent fiscal year budget.

Contact the Town of Florence at 520-868-7559 for more information and to apply for the program.

Attachment A – Downtown Redevelopment Area Map

